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APPROVED FOR RELEASE

DATE: 1/17/01

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**Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami:  
A Semiautonomous Political Force**

[REDACTED] the Jamaat-i-Islami, an orthodox Muslim religious and political organization founded in the late 1930s, is a semiautonomous political force that carries out, with the unofficial approval of the Zia regime, many of the functions normally handled by the national government. The Jamaat tacitly supports the Zia government and its Islamization policy, but its support, [REDACTED] is based on the fear that a replacement government could be hostile to the strict Islamic ideals of the Jamaat.

[REDACTED] the heart of the close relationship between the Zia regime and the Jamaat lies with the latter's control of its violence-prone student wing, the Islamic Jamiat Tulaba (IJT). The relationship had its origins in the agitation in 1977 against the Bhutto regime that set the stage for Zia's coup. The IJT participated in the anti-Bhutto disturbances and after Bhutto's downfall battled the pro-Bhutto forces in the streets side by side with the police. The IJT was the most violent and successful of the student groups that were wresting control of the campuses from Bhutto's supporters. The IJT, with the acquiescence of the Zia regime, has continued to stifle pro-Bhutto, antiregime activism since then. Over the past year the IJT has lost some ground in campus elections, but it remains the dominant force in student politics. The Jamaat and the IJT have aided the Zia government in other ways by:

- Providing an informal diplomatic channel to the Gulf states and Iran.
- Helping to settle labor disputes.
- Aiding the regime in dealing with Afghan refugees and the Mujahideen.

**Keeping the Campuses Calm**

Given the traditionally activist political role of the students in Pakistan, the IJT's control over key campuses is particularly important to the security of

the regime. In Punjab, where political agitation by the students has been especially troublesome to the government, the IJT controls both universities and 10 of the 28 colleges. The IJT has been able to hold public meetings and processions there that would have been quickly quashed by police if attempted by other groups. In Sind and the North-West Frontier Province, however, press reports indicate that the IJT is weaker and is less leniently treated by campus administrators, the police, and the courts.

**Foreign Ties and Informal Diplomacy**

[REDACTED] the Jamaat has established close relations with conservative Muslim governments and organizations in the Middle East, particularly with Saudi Arabia. Close relations between the Jamaat and the Saudi monarchy were instrumental in arranging Saudi aid for Pakistan's purchase of F-16s, and Saudi subsidies to the Afghan Mujahideen are being channeled through the Jamaat's relief program. Two trips by the Jamaat's leader, Mian Tufail Muhammad to Saudi Arabia for medical checkups were paid for by the Saudis.

The Jamaat's conservative Islamic credentials have given it access to Khomeini's regime in Iran that, [REDACTED] has been used by Zia to improve Pakistan's initially bad relations with Iran's revolutionary government. Despite Jamaat's cool relations with Pakistan's Shias, Jamaat leaders have visited Iran and have frequently received Iranian leaders in Pakistan, including Khomeini adviser Ayatollah Khomeini.

Throughout its history, the Jamaat has maintained its connections with the Muslim Brotherhood and other conservative Islamic organizations in other countries.

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NESA NESAR 83-009  
15 April 1983

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During the hardline response of the Assad regime to the strikes led by the Muslim Brotherhood in Aleppo in 1981, IJT students demonstrated against the brutality of the Syrian Government.

[REDACTED] The Jamaat has received Egyptian Brotherhood spokesman Umar Talmisani several times, including one visit in October 1982 during which Talmisani addressed an IJT conference. According to the Jamaat's deputy secretary general, the Jamaat has close relations with overt Islamic societies in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates.

#### Cooperation in Labor Disputes

In 1981 the Zia regime used its ties with the Jamaat to attain a favorable outcome in a Collective Bargaining Agency referendum among the 102,000 workers in the Railways Operating Division. The regime's confidence that the results would be favorable [REDACTED] depended on the support of the Jamaat to counter the strength of a pro-Moscow union. A Jamaat-backed union emerged from the shadows to lead in the first round of the referendum and to win in the runoff—allegedly by virtue of massive vote rigging.

[REDACTED] the victory was sealed by hundreds of IJT students who used false voter identification to vote in place of actual employees.

#### Relations With the Afghan Refugees and Mujahideen

The Jamaat cooperates with the government in the latter's relief program among the Afghan refugees. The Jamaat alone among Pakistan's political and religious groups has been given considerable scope for operation among the Afghans. The Jamaat program, [REDACTED] concentrates on caring for the refugees between their arrival in Pakistan and their resettlement in UN-administered camps. The Jamaat also has close relations with some of the Afghan Mujahideen groups.

#### Strain in the Relationship

The Embassy sees cracks in the relationship between the Jamaat, the IJT, and the Zia regime. The IJT has conducted a nationwide protest at university campuses and staged violent demonstrations in Karachi during January and February to assert its claim that university authorities reneged on an agreement to drop all charges against an IJT Karachi University campus leader charged in the murder of a rival student last July.

[REDACTED] the major sticking point appears to be the refusal of the court to agree to a police proposal to drop all charges.

Jamaat doubts of the commitment of the regime, including President Zia himself, to Islamization is another possible source of trouble in the relationship.

[REDACTED] The Jamaat points to the lack of significant progress in Islamizing society and quibbles with Zia's interpretation of Islamic doctrine. We believe that Jamaat leaders want to see society based on Islamic ideals more compatible with their own strict interpretation in order that their party can survive beyond Zia's tenure. The regime must strike a balance between exploiting Jamaat assistance and maintaining its distance from the Jamaat lest it share in the dislike that much of the Pakistani public feels toward the Jamaat.

#### Outlook

We believe that the cooperative relationship that the Jamaat enjoys with the Zia regime is fragile. In our view, the Jamaat is likely to temper its cooperation with the government if Islamization falters even more, which seems highly likely. If the government cracks down harder on student unrest, the Jamaat may unleash the IJT, which would exacerbate government-student relations.

The regime, in our opinion, might end the relationship if it perceived that the Jamaat's now limited power base was being further eroded. The government would then be able to modify its policies, particularly Islamization, to meet changing social, economic, and political conditions with less fear of regime-threatening reactions by the Jamaat.

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